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Express Ads

RAPID TRANSIT IN CANADA by J.W. Boorse, Jr. is now out of print. Five copies only are available at $6.50 ea. ppd. Third Rail Press, Box 79, Babylon, NY 11702.

THE THIRD RAIL, The Magazine of Rapid Transit, No. 3 ready March. Six issues for $4.50. Start with No. 3, No. 2 (Pres. Ford's transit record) or No. 1 (GM's drive against street railways). Third Rail Press, Box 79, Babylon, NY 11702.

PUT ATLANTA ON THE AMTRAK MAP. Read our proposal for the correction of this unfortunate state of affairs whereby the South's largest city, most important business center and transportation hub has been left out of the NRPC system. For a copy send twenty cents in stamps to: Bring Back the Trains Campaign C/O Robert van Wormer, 902 12th Avenue, Jacksonville, Alabama 35265.

If history is correct, as I'm sure it is, GEORGE WASHINGTON didn't cross the Delaware just to get across or stay at Valley Forge to freeze. Help me by writing to Amtrak to reinstate his name on the Chic.-Cincy-DC train both ways for Bicentennial's sake. Thank you. Merline L. Marlowe, RR 2, Fairfax, MN 55332.

"NEW YORK SUBWAY" many illus. & charts. 160 pp. 12x9" hardbound. $10. Send to: CZ/76, Russ Lane, 809 Pawnee Drive N."., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405.

YOU MAY HAVE READ ADS in this publication urging you to ignore the government's plea for energy efficiency. Our aim is to counter this ad campaign and encourage the silent majority to be quiet and let the government and the oil companies take care of the energy shortage. Support MUTE (Millions United Towards Efficiency).

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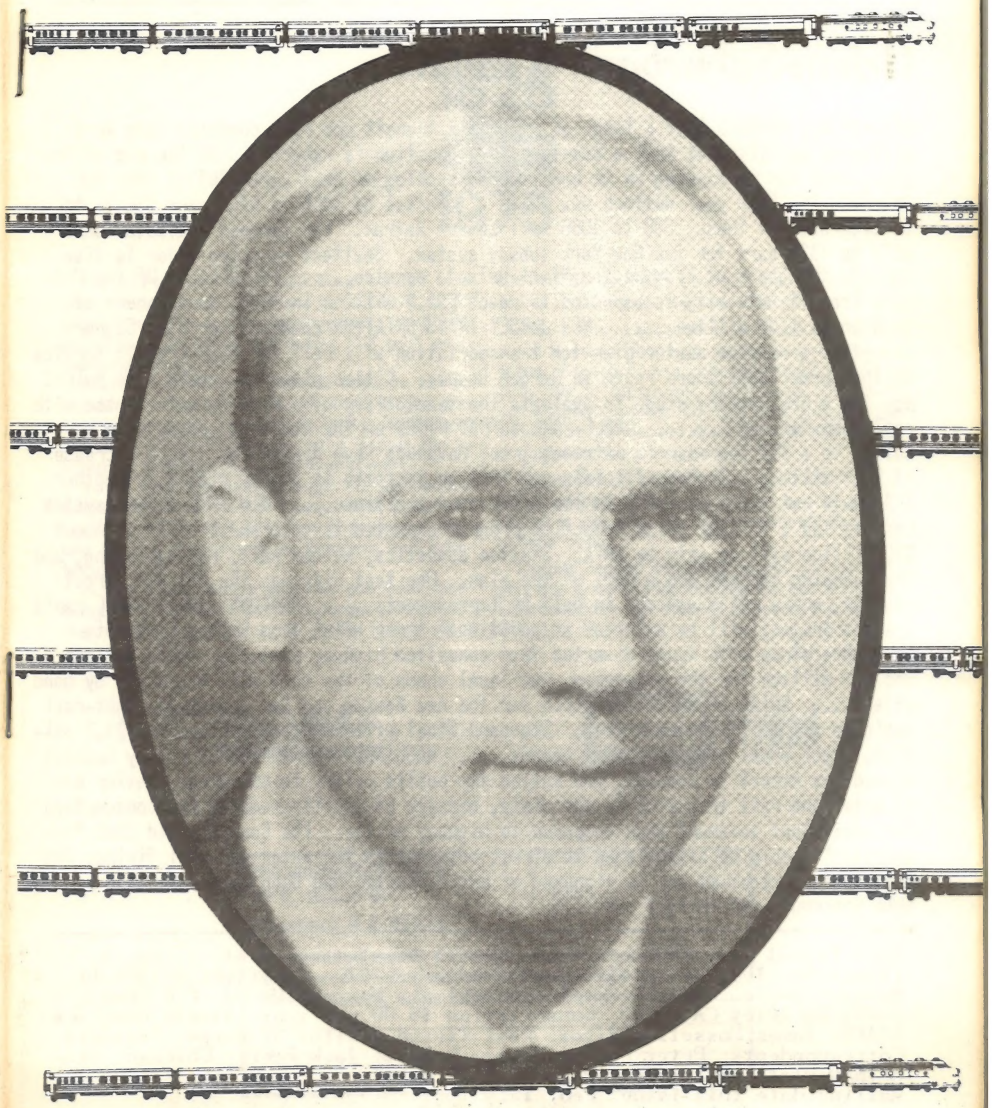
MORE EXPRESS ADS appear on page 18.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

35¢

VOL. 5 NO. 3
FIRST ISSUE OF
FEBRUARY 1975
Issue #101



ON THE COVER: New Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup, in a C&O/B&O photo circa 1966. See article in this issue.

SOME NEW AMTRAK TIMETABLES APPEAR

Late January saw the release of a new Amtrak Northeast Schedule (effective Dec. 15) and three timecards: an East-Midwest Schedule dated Dec. 15; a timecard for the Detroit-Jackson MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE effective Jan. 20; and a New York-Washington-Sunset Route Schedule dated Dec. 31. The name trains covered by this last-mentioned schedule are the SUNSET LIMITED, COAST STARLIGHT, and SAN JOAQUIN. Changes in this schedule reflect only the alterations in the Bakersfield-Los Angeles bus connection. Connecting NdeM service from Ciudad Juarez to Mexico City is now also listed. A feature adopted in these new publications is the placement of train names of major trains in larger lettering over their respective tables.

Urban-Suburban Transit

RAILWAY AGE REPORTS that a total of 294 rapid transit and rail commuter cars were delivered in 1974; but that a big jump in production is expected. At the end of the year, work was proceeding on an undelivered backlog of 2667 cars, 347 of them for Amtrak. The 5-10 year outlook now shows a forecast of 5045 to 5755 cars likely to be ordered. Of these, 500 to 1000 will be for Amtrak. The largest estimated orders will be 1320 cars for the New York subway system. Smallest expected order is five cars to the State of Florida for Miami-Orlando service..... THE DEFICIT OF the Chicago Transit Authority is expected to reach $95.3 million in 1975, on revenues of just under $200 million..... NEW JERSEY TRANSPORTATION commissioner Alan Sagner says that a revised master plan for transportation will call for mass transit service on the former West Shore route in Bergen County. Cities along the route have helped pay for a preliminary study to evaluate the feasibility of a plan to get started with rail commuter service..... HALF-FARE SUNDAY RIDES on the New York subway have resulted in a 30% increase in patronage, but revenues have dropped by 12%, a decrease of $4.1 million. System officials say that an increase in Sunday riding ay another 17% would put the experiment in the break-even position..... NEW YORK SUBWAY system has started a 10-year noise reduction program expected to cost $62.5 million. About $50 million will be paid by UMTA. Station acoustics, welded rail, rail-grinding, and wheel-truing systems are a part of the plan. One test site was the BMT 49th Street station, where noise was cut in half by improvements..... BOSTON'S SOUTH SHORE rapid transit project will be extended an additional three miles from Quincy Center to South Braintree with funds diverted from cancelled highway projects. UMTA has approved $23 million for the extension, and local share of the cost will be raised by bond sales..... NOISE SUPPRESSION WHEELS for the new Boston and San Francisco light-rail vehicles are called Acousta-Flex. Standard Steel will manufacture them for $1.2 million. Each wheel will weigh 260 pounds..... WASHINGTON STATE ENERGY Policy Council issued its report in January, and called for public policy to encourage heavier use of water and rail transport in the state, because of greatly reduced btu consumption for equivalent movement when compared to highway or air. The Council said that "incentives" should be established to direct movement to the water and rail fields, and that no rail right-of-way be disposed of until studies had been made of future possible passenger and freight use.....

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Mailing date this issue: Feb. 13.

The Trip of a Lifetime . . .

RAIL-TOUR ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES DURING BRITAIN'S HISTORIC 150th ANNIVERSARY OF RAILROADING!

May 29 — June 12, 1975

1825 1975

The 1974 "Britain-by-Rail" Tour brought rave notices from people who have travelled the world over. The 1975 tour, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of British railroading, will pack even more excitement.

After British Airways (BOAC) deposits you in London, you'll have a brief stay there to get your land legs and see some of the sights, then board the crack *Royal Highlander* for a sleeper trip to Inverness in Scotland's Loch Ness country.

You'll take the train through the spectacular Scottish Highlands to the lovely resort of Kyle of Lochalsh on the Irish Sea, then a steamer to Mallaig for rail connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

A high-speed electric will take you from Edinburgh to York, and from there to the great British Rail Experimental Center in Derby where you'll see the 150-mph APT (and you may be one of the first to ride the new Highspeed Train).

After a stop at Shrewsbury on the Welsh border, you'll travel to Plymouth on the English Channel in the "English Riviera" country. You'll visit Salisbury, site of mysterious Stonehenge. And that's just a small sampling. On free time, you can ride some of the 17 historic steam railways that will operate during the anniversary.

Rail and hotel accommodations are all first class. All breakfasts and some special events are included in the price. Air connections are from and to New York.

Despite rapidly escalating prices, we can offer you this once-in-a-lifetime trip for just $950. Accommodations are limited, so return the coupon today!

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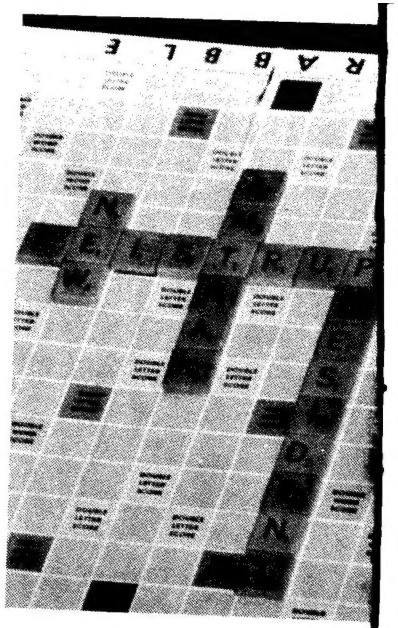
TO UNSCRAMBLE AMTRAK'S PROBLEMS
A New President at NRPC



Paul H. Reistrup

As reported last issue, Amtrak's board of directors, at its Jan. 29 meeting, voted to elect Paul H. Reistrup President of Amtrak, effective March 1, to replace resigning Roger Lewis, who has been head of the rail corporation since its beginning. Reistrup traveled to Washington from his Illinois home for the meeting. The vote was reportedly virtually unanimous.

Reistrup, 42, was born in Sioux City, IA on May 24, 1932. He and his wife have four children, and live in Olympia Fields, IL. At present he is Senior Vice President for (freight) Traffic with Illinois Central Gulf Railroad. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1954 and began his railroad career in 1957 as a management trainee with the B&O, where he held positions of assistant division engineer, general yardmaster, trainmaster, general superintendent - car utilization and distribution, and director of passenger service. In the latter post he gained a reputation for innovative moves to improve passenger service to attempt to make it profitable, including discount fare experiments, on-board movies, a refurbishing program, and an auto ferry service between Chicago and Washington.

In 1967 he moved to Illinois Central as Vice President of Passenger Service, and has since then been Vice President - Intermodal Services, and in his present position with the merged ICG railroad, which includes a membership on its board of directors.

Reistrup's official statement following his election was: "I am very pleased that the Board of Directors has given me this vote of confidence and an opportunity to lead Amtrak as the corporation continues to revitalize rail passenger service for America in a time when the demands of energy, economy, ecology and convenience demand such progress. I look forward to working with the men and women of Amtrak and with the Administration, the Congress, the railroad industry, and the labor organizations. I believe in teamwork, and it will be my purpose at Amtrak to run a teamwork railroad from top to bottom with the indispensable goal of providing Americans the best passenger train service attainable."

Observers are now searching for hints of what kind of leadership Reistrup will bring to Amtrak. Some of these come in an interview with a Wall Street Journal reporter prior to his election: Reistrup said that something must be done to reverse the expense trend at Amtrak--the trend toward rising costs per passenger mile--"even if the total deficit grows as traffic expands." He noted that expenses are twice as high as revenues, commenting: "I've never seen an operation that had a larger catalog of problems." While Reistrup told the reporter that he thought Amtrak should develop short-haul routes and de-emphasize long distance trains, it is important to note that this statement preceded his election, and this idea may be subject to revision once he gets to the throttle of Amtrak. Reistrup has made no other official statements since his election (other than that quoted above), and most likely will not until March. He will be in Washington for the next board meeting on Feb. 26. Persistent rumors suggest that he will bring 7 men with him from ICG, and that a major shakeup of Washington personnel will take place. Roger Lewis remains as a board member, and at least for the time being as its chairman.

ADMINISTRATION WOULD REMOVE CITIZEN INFLUENCE ON PASSENGER TRAINS

President Ford's budget for fiscal 1976, sent to Congress Feb. 3, includes legislation designed to remove the ICC's function of setting quality of service standards for passenger trains, notably Amtrak trains. It would also reduce the ability of Congress to require added experimental routes to the nationwide rail system. These changes must be approved by Congress, and it appears likely that difficulty will be found in getting the approval of that body for such legislation. Included in the budget is $350 million in grants to Amtrak to cover fiscal 1975 operating expenses of about $298 million plus a supplemental grant of $77.9 now being sought from Congress. Instead of giving Amtrak loan guarantees, the DOT now proposes to grant it $110 million in fiscal 1976 for equipment purchases and some track upgrading.

MONEY APPROVED TO KEEP PENN CENTRAL FROM HALTING OPERATIONS

Before recessing for Washington's Birthday holiday in February, the Senate approved the spending of $275 million to keep Penn Central afloat. The House Commerce Committee okayed $347 million, while the Administration requested at least $305 million. Final action must await the end of the recess, but indications are as we go to press that PC's threat to close down won't be fulfilled, since a cash influx is foreseen.

MAKING WAY FOR THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE

There wasn't a big celebration when Amtrak's and Michigan's new Detroit-Ann Arbor MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE began running Jan. 20, tho many months of behind-the-scenes work were involved. No one from Washington came out for the event, tho local Amtrak people were on hand. Rick Priest made the Last Run of the RDC train that was the predecessor of the M.E.: On Friday morning, Jan. 17, PC 374, consisting of one RDC-1, left Ann Arbor on time at 6:45am, making its last run into Detroit. After a brief stop at Ypsilanti at 6:55, the RDC was nearly full with businessmen, a couple of women, and apparently just one railfan (me). We arrived at Michigan Central Station 5 minutes early, at 7:35. The RDC is numbered 55 and still reads "New York Central" across the top, with just a PC logo at one end. Several commuters commented that they were glad to get rid of this old car (the car is said to be going to New York).

Later that day the commuters would be returning on Amtrak 375, the MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE, leaving Detroit at 5:25pm and stopping at Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, and 2 new stops at Chelsea and Jackson. Deadheading on the WOLVERINE #360 that day were 3 Amtrak coaches (6022, 6011, 6069) for the MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE. One diesel unit is used.

A NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH ON THE RAILS

by Don MacInnes

New Year's Eve: my San Diego, CA to Richmond, VA journey began well with train 775 to Los Angeles on time at all points (consist: units 523, 398; cars 1050, 5234, 3820, 5226, 7504 & 7506--last 2 cars pristine SP Shasta coaches complete with photomurals).

LAUPT was busy this evening. Train 2 was called on time, sleeper space checked at the gate, and all seemed in order. My assignment was Rmt 6, car 230, the "thru" sleeper to NYC (consist of #2: units 567, 570; cars 1109, 9920, 9931, 9903, 3390, 8500, 2501 "Blue Grove", 2401 "Bad Axe River," & 2606 "Pacific Command," operating as car 230). A 3/4 load leaving LAX on time, maintained schedule thru the night; arrived Tucson 10min AOT. Steward in the 8500 was using the famed Jan. 1972 menus for lunch and dinner (soup/salad bowl $1.45; rib eye beef $3.60!).

East of Tucson, parties unknown systematically plundered the baggage storage areas of the hi-level cars. Working undetected on the lower level, they stole valuables. The baggage car was also entered and ransacked while the attendant was at breakfast.

Anticipating some sort of New Year's Eve celebration on board #2, I discovered quickly that the lounge car attendant possessed strong religious scruples against beverage alcohol, card playing and partying. He succeeded in discouraging the most determined revelers by 11:15pm and closed the lounge shortly afterwards. During the following two days he reluctantly provided beverage service, broke up card games, and generally impeded any attempts at pleasure in his car. It appears that he is a dining car waiter assigned against his desires to lounge car service.

Our 20mins AOT was erased by 57 minutes in El Paso. Two inches of snow on the ground on New Year's Day, as we joined a sleeping car attendant in listening to the Rose Bowl game on his transistor radio. Attendant of "Pacific Command" noted that in LAX he found the car without blankets; was assigned all new, blue Amtrak blankets. He pointed out their deficiencies: lighter, shed readily; also noted how Amtrak towels and facecloths shed their red dye...on the skin!

Approaching Houston: 75 miles of 30mph slow orders for track renovation. Late one hour at Houston. Entering the city, we passed the Chicago-bound LONE STAR, with "Wingate Brook" bringing up the rear. Forty minutes after Houston arrival, an abrupt announcement informed the occupants of car 230 ("thru" NYC sleeper) that the car was being removed and all passengers would have to transfer to space in the other two sleepers. Loss of brakes was the reason. The car was booked solid. Several passengers were still in bed; most (including me) had completely unpacked, anticipating a four-night sojourn. Our attendant was most helpful in arranging the transfer. No other Amtrak personnel were in evidence. Several passengers were irate. Doubling up was the order of the day. Vague assurances of Southern Railway equipment ready in New Orleans helped little to calm the anger.

The car was quickly pulled off, but the train delayed another 20mins before leaving Houston 2hrs late. Arrival in New Orleans was about 1½ hours late. Contrary to assurances in Houston, no one knew of the sleeper failure, and there was no car ready for the "thru" passengers to bed down in. By 11pm an Amtrak sleeper had been located in the yards, and the night duty attendant persuaded to make it up. The replacement (#2790 "Harnet County"), we later learned, had been in New Orleans for a week awaiting parts for the running gear. That they were needed was alarmingly apparent every time the car rolled over 30mph. Frightening vibrations threatened every seam and weld.

But those horrors were to come. By midnight our car load of "thru" passengers were settled in, and we had heard the last of the complaints of the overworked night car attendant. By midnight, the complete consist of Southern Railway #2 was also in place --delayed this evening by Amtrak's problems. Consist: (all SouRy except 2790) 3786 coach & 3499 "Royal Palm" sleeper, both deadheading; 711 baggage-coach, 821, 836, 824, 831, 841 (all coaches), 3309 36-seat diner, 2014 "Shenandoah River" sleeper, 2015 "Rappahannock River" sleeper, 2790 "Harnet County" Amtrak sleeper, and 1602 dome-parlor--the only non-stainless steel car in the consist.

Car cleaners worked past midnight readying the interiors; all cars had been thru the washer; however, workers hand-washed all exterior windows to remove streaks and watermarks. There was no lexan, as well.

The SouRy line and ride was well-described in a recent issue of Trains Magazine. Operation was fast and without delays. The right of way between Birmingham and Atlanta is very curvy and without benefit of adequate superelevation. For the first time since riding 39½-hour service Oakland-Chicago, I felt some apprehension: would we stay on the rails? Would we tip over? Walking thru the train was hazardous.

Dining car service was first class in every respect. Great pride was evident in table service and cuisine. Waiters balanced trays miraculously; patrons had less luck with bowls and cups on the serpentine line and suffered many indignities with hot coffee, sloshing soup and skittering entrees.

Sleeping north of Atlanta in "Harnet County" was a challenge. The ominous vibrations became deafening as well, and the mad-dash pace of our train threw would-be sleepers from side to side violently. Anxiety added to the mix didn't help, but exhaustion finally took hold and sleep came--to be abruptly ended at 5:15am with a 30-min call prior to arrival in Charlottesville, my detraining point from the "thru" LAX-NYC sleeper. We were, regretably, on time to the minute. The prospect of a 4-hr layover in order to catch train 98 for a brief ride to Richmond prompted me to board a Trailways bus at once, and I was home before sunup.

Impressions: Amtrak on-board service has deteriorated significantly with the removal of the PSR's and On-Board Service Directors. Personnel are unsupervised and perform duties haphazardly. Equipment failure problems still plague Amtrak. Economy cuts in service are evident. On-board supervision is mandatory.

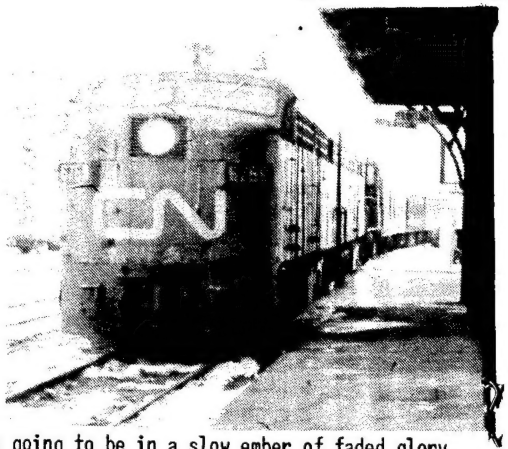
Southern Railway lives up to its reputation: 1950-style service and equipment done as well as the best in the 1950-era. Pride, hustle, function, style and service all evident. Sleeping car porters in navy blue and brass buttons almost seemed as if a charade. But on-time operation, clean cars, proud employees, mechanical excellence and the like are no charade.

I had flown out to California earlier on an American Airlines night coach in first class seating. Service was tacky on board (in response to my request on being served a drink: "I'm sorry, sir, we don't serve nuts west of Dallas.") Yet, I am forced to the conclusion that future trips to the West Coast will probably be by air. Six hours of poor service is far more tolerable than 48+ of the same.

NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION
ROUTE-BY-ROUTE SUMMARY
ON-TIME PERFORMANCE
(ICC METHOD)
December 1974

Routes	Trains Operated Dec. '74	Per Cent On-Time Dec. 1974	Per Cent On-Time Nov. 1974
METROLINERS	878	81.9	88.1
TURBOTRAINS			
New York/Boston	116	57.8	75.5
TURBOLINERS			
Chicago/St. Louis	97	59.8	64.6
SHORT HAUL			
Albany/Montreal	62	85.5	66.7
Chicago/Carbondale	62	56.5	63.3
Chicago/Champagne	62	27.4	36.7
Chicago/Dubuque	62	96.8	91.7
Chicago/Detroit	124	81.5	90.0
Chicago/Milwaukee	310	92.6	93.3
Chicago/St. Louis	80	66.3	51.3
Chicago/Quincy	64	75.0	81.7
Los Angeles/San Diego	186	91.4	87.8
New York/Boston			
Inland Route	475	79.8	79.7
Shore Route	129	83.7	90.9
New York/Buffalo	311	61.4	87.0
New York/Washington			
Conventional	683	88.0	88.4
Oakland/Bakersfield	62	96.8	98.3
Philadelphia/Harrisburg	520	83.7	84.8
Port Huron/Chicago	62	91.9	96.7
Seattle/Portland	124	82.3	88.3
Seattle/Vancouver	62	91.9	91.7
Washington/Boston	584	81.5	88.7
Washington/Cumberland	73	69.9	88.7
Washington/Harrisburg	88	44.3	53.5
TOTAL SHORT HAUL	4185	80.8	84.8
LONG DISTANCE ROUTES			
Boston/Harrisburg	10	90.0	70.0
Chciago/Florida	93	75.3	88.9
Chicago/Houston	62	85.5	95.0
Chicago/Los Angeles	62	74.2	86.7
Chicago/Minneapolis	16	81.3	79.0
Charlottesville/Newport News	62	80.7	80.0
Chicago/New Orleans	62	40.3	18.3
Chicago/Oakland	64	89.1	95.0
Chicago/Seattle	108	92.6	91.2
Chicago/Cincinnati/Washington	62	75.8	78.3
New Orleans/Los Angeles	27	70.4	73.4
New York/Chicago	62	0	1.7
New York/Detroit	62	67.7	73.3
New York/Florida	253	90.9	97.6
New York/Harrisburg	43	81.4	92.7
New York/Kansas City	62	0	6.7
Seattle/Los Angeles	62	35.5	68.9
St. Louis/Laredo	27	51.9	69.2
Washington/Montreal	62	75.8	76.7
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	1261	69.7	74.6
TOTAL AMTRAK	6537	78.1	82.8

Rail Canada



A STARTLING INCREASE in passenger train ridership in Canada has been noted. Statistics Canada reports a massive 28.1% jump in revenue passenger miles from Oct. 1973 to Oct. 1974, an increase matched perhaps only by CN increases in the mid-1960's. The jump was from 1,216,678,000 passenger miles to 1,558,475,000. Since passenger car miles increased only 2.5%, the figures indicate a big increase in car occupancy. The figures cover 97% of Canada's rail mileage.

IF SLEEPING CARS die out on CN, it is going to be in a slow ember of faded glory, beginning with the April, 1975 summer schedule. As being finalized now in Ottawa, the westbound SUPER CONTINENTAL schedule will be a 4-nights-out trip rather than 3 nights as at present. The eastbound trip will have a similar extension to 4 nights. The proposed schedule has the westbound train leaving Montreal at 9:25pm, and Ottawa at 11:59. Times at Edmonton the third day are 6:10-7:10am, and arrival in Vancouver at 7:55am. Eastbound, the Vancouver departure will be 6:45pm. Edmonton will be at 9:15pm the next day. Fourth-morning arrival in Ottawa is 7:10am and Montreal at 9:40am. Good connections with the RDC fleet at Edmonton are broken.

"THE MARCHAND PLAN" for radical changes in rail passenger service has apparently been leaked in part to the Quebec press. The Montreal Dimanche-Matin reports some highlights of the plan now under study: (1) Discontinuance of the Montreal-Quebec Rapido service, with CP Rail taking over via the North Shore; (2) removal of the TurboTrain service from the Montreal-Ottawa line; (3) discontinuance of the CANADIAN, leaving CN's SUPER CONTINENTAL to provide trans-continental service; (4) the Maritimes served exclusively by CN, using CP track via Saint-Jean, Magog and Sherbrooke in Quebec; (5) a special CN service between Campbellton, New Brunswick, and Sainte-Foy, near Quebec City; (6) demolition of the Gare du Palais in Quebec City, replacing it with an ultra-modern station near Sainte-Foy.

CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has purchased the CP Rail ferry "Princess of Acadia" for continued use on the Saint John, N.B.-Digby, N.S. Bay of Fundy run. Nova Scotia political and business leaders praised the purchase, expressing hope that it would be a first step in a federal takeover the CP Rail's Dominion Atlantic Railway subsidiary.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION has investigated the head-on collision of a CN freight and passenger train 19 miles west of Kingston last Dec. 20, and reported that the freight train engineer went thru a yellow and a red signal. The engineers of the two trains, and one passenger, were killed, and four people were seriously injured.

WALKOUTS BY LOCOMOTIVE engineers beginning Jan. 23 disrupted CN passenger service in many parts of Canada. the SUPER CONTINENTAL train was suspended indefinitely. The SUPER that left Toronto Jan. 23 was terminated at Winnipeg. RDC runs in Alberta were terminated, along with many Montreal-Toronto runs, including Turbo and Rapido trips. Regular service was offerred in the SW Ontario corridor to Windsor and Sarnia, and to northern Ontario. RDC runs Toronto-Niagara Falls were cut off, as was mid-day GO Train service in the Toronto area.

OTTAWA RUMOURS IN late January indicated that CP Rail would be seeking the end of its CANADIAN transcontinental runs sometime in 1975, possibly in the fall, at the end of the summer tourist peak period. Some observers believe there is little or no hope for the domeliner, if CP Rail moves aggressively against the train in the near future.

Comments one reader: if you Americans could spare Anthony Haswell for a few years, we really could use him.

Inside Amtrak Headquarters

PART THREE

BY PETER PUTNAM BRETZ

This afternoon, despite his busy schedule, Jim Bryant volunteered to accompany me across the 8th floor to the office of Mr. Edward Buyes, Director of On Board Services.

We shook hands and, sitting down, I asked Mr. Buyes for an overall view of department responsibilities. 'Just caring for the needs of the passenger en route' he said. Amtrak divides passengers into three categories: long haul, short haul, and intermediate. These in turn break down into business and family travelers. He said the needs of passengers are carried out by analyzing route needs, taking historical data and bringing it up to date and putting it to work--which is to say that Amtrak does this time what worked well last time.

RTN: Can you give an example?
Buyes: We're up to date on the Metroliner--as to the sort of food services neededfor the coach passenger. That's the menu right there.

RTN: Yes, here's No. 1833, 11/74 with the breakfast at $1.25 and lunch/dinner at $2.25. It reads 'Delicious - mmmmmm - full course train meals are available served piping hot - ask your attendant.'

Buyes: This is one of the complaints we had about the Metroliner in the past. The coach passenger had access only to sandwiches. He had no way to get a hot meal. This is the answer to that.

RTN: We have here the Mile High Hero Sandwich on Italian bread for $1.25 and Ham and Swiss for 95¢, and...

Buyes: Pre-inflation prices.

RTN: Yes, what about that? Does your department establish prices or have anything to do with the menus?

Buyes: We don't establish prices, but we make the menus. We're just now (in November) changing all the menus to new ones. We'll keep the geographical area idea more than anything else.

RTN: When will these appear?

Buyes: On the Florida trains, Dec. 13. On the SOUTHWEST LIMITED Jan. 15, and likewise on the BROADWAY.

(An office worker brought in a large cardboard mockupof the new SOUTHWEST LIMITED menu.)

RTN: I see the No. 3 Club Breakfast is the same price ($2.10). However, the continental breakfast is up to $1.15; the oatmeal is 65¢ instead of 60¢. Small increases like that. The coffee and hot chocolate are both up a nickel.

Buyes: We combined the first class and coach menus. And I think we're proposing a general increase of 10 to 15% across the board.

RTN: Yes, I notice the Pot Roasted Beef with buttered noodles here used to be $2.95 but is up to $3.40 now, and the Trout from $3.40 to $4.00. These increases then, are no more than what it costs Amtrak?--but no less either?

Buyes: No less. We're not going to make any money out of the deal--we're going to lose money. It's a service we feel we have to give.

RTN: This SOUTHWEST LIMITED menu will be the only one with the train's name on it?

Buyes: Yes. All other trains will have the same menu.

RTN: Now it seems you have eliminated the Lamb Chops and the Omelette with Baked Tomatoes.

Buyes: Yes, that was for lack of popular demand.

RTN: But the Sand Dabs are still there.

Buyes: Yes, it's a good dish.

RTN: Now the 12 oz. steak has been increased a mere 10% from $6.95 to $7.65.

Buyes: It depends upon the item. We cannot be selective. We have items that have gone up 30% and items that have gone up 400%. We don't show such increases on the menu. Sugar went up 400%. Any item based on sugar is up that much. We're just going to lose money on it. Here's a proposed lunch menu that will reflect roughly a 10% increase over existing prices. If you look at some of the items, you'll see that what we are doing is corbining what used to be other dishes Instead of the broiled chicken you see here, there used to be chicken Tetravini. If we had chicken, we're staying with chicken If we had beef, we'll stay with the beef--but this is changing.

RTN: Instead of chicken and spaghetti, it's stuffed chicken here.

Buyes: Right. Now we do have some things that we didn't have--the Hamburger, for instance.

RTN: "The Hamburger...a generous portion of double ground...broiled the way you like it.. lettuce, tomato, pickle and potato chips.." But no price listed yet.

Buyes: I don't think the feature dinner will be more than $2.25. Now there is also broiled steak, you know, to give the passengers a variety on the train. Some of the changes we feel excited about--particularly a big change in the Florida service. We're putting the diners back to back. Traditionally, diners have been separated--one in one end, one in the other end of the train. As they go back to back, lounges will back them. That will give a flexibility to spread more evenly the flow of passengers. Traditionally, in the METEOR, there was a line in one diner and nothing in the other one. In making this change, we'll really manage to spread. We'll also have people enjoying the lounge right next to their dining car.

And of course we have a reservation system, but we have another system too: You still have the person who did not make a reservation coming in. The way it worked before, you had the diner and then maybe a sleeper and then the lounge, and the guy had to wait. Where was the passenger going to wait? What was he going to do? Now, we're really attuned to the passenger's needs.

RTN: Does this create any switching problems down the line?

Buyes: No, we separate them so when the switching comes they all fall identically with no problem.

RTN: Is there any restriction on a passenger--can he wander into the second diner if he so desires?

Buyes: That's the whole idea. Same menus, too. That gives us another flexibility. Should one of our diners fail--and we don't mention this thing, but...well, we have flexibility.

RTN: This went into effect December 13. Was that just on the SILVER METEOR?

Buyes: No, on all four services. We're excited about how the service will look. Of course, there'll be some kinks.

RTN: Can you give an example of the "kinks" that are currently bugging this department?

Buyes: Well, it's hard to place one item above the other, but a problem we've had is en-route provisioning--in case we run out of an item. We can really do that now. On a 16- or 24-hour trip, we break it down into four places. We gear for every 8 hours or so. Should we have a problem--with refrigeration, say, we can anticipate and call ahead. These are watering points en route. There, I can take out the necessary foods for this particular meal. And when I say provisioning I mean that also we can take care of other problems on board because now we have other capabilities at these points.

RTN: Suppose there is a particular car attendant who finds a consistent mechanical problem. What I have in mind is a problem about the coffee machines in conventional trains--in the snack bar coaches, particularly.

Buyes: I'm glad you mentioned that. We're just testing a new coffee service thru Cory. Now the Cory coffee service is a very simple one; you pour water thru the top, put a filter on the middle hole and coffee comes thru. Nothing to break down. The biggest problem you have on the train is that everything, thru gyration, will break down. The Cory machine does not have mechanical parts. We startd the Cory system on the Metroliners, on 132 and 136 or 138, and it's very successful. If it continues successfully for the next two weeks, we'll put it on all our corridor trains.

RTN: Turning to an area other than food, this department is responsible for such things as putting the right amount of towels in the sleeping cars and things along that line.

A tree-lined walk alongside the Amtrak building photographed by Peter Bretz during his visit to Amtrak's Washington headquarters.

Buyes: Yes.

RTN: Well, Amtrak has advertised blankets available for the coach passengers, but no blankets were available on my trip here. What's the story then?

Buyes: On which trains have you been?

RTN: Quite a few: the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, the SUNSET LIMITED, the INTER-AMERICAN, the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, and the COAST STARLIGHT.

Buyes: Okay, blankets... 12,000 of them have been ordered, but there was a snafu in delivery. 3,000 have been delivered and they're waiting for 9,000 to be delivered from Supply. They should be on the trains.

RTN: Are these the same as the woolen blankets that have been replacing the old Pullman blankets--blue in color?

Buyes: Blue in color. The first order that we had was green. Also, the logo--the arrow in it was pointing in the wrong direction. So I think we have a snafu on that. Well, it was a snafu on the manufacturing end, and in any event we got it.

RTN: Are there no red blankets?

Buyes: I don't think so. The first 3,000 are wool and I think the next 9,000 are a mixture of wool and synthetic--polyester.

RTN: That answers my question about the blankets. Now, however, I'm under the impression that once a train leaves the terminal it's pretty much left to its own devices. You mentioned provisioning of food, but suppose the porter goes in and says "We don't have enough blankets for the beds?" or somehow the linen closet wasn't filled and there's not enough linen--something like that. What then?

Buyes: He fills out a 333 at the first stop and at a major location afterwards, which could be 2, 3, or 4 hours later on, we'll board extra supplies.

RTN: Does this actually work in practice?

Buyes: Yes sir.

Another exterior view of 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, the Amtrak Building, photographed by Peter Bretz on a November day.

RTN: Well, then the supplies have to be stashed at these various places.

Buyes: No, not necessarily. Sometimes you pick them up from an incoming train. In other words, we might not get them within--well, let's say the trip takes 30 hours. Within 6 hours we'll get them to him.

RTN: Can you explain the 333?

Buyes: 333 is a codable message. The message is dropped at any one of the stations. It is relayed to the regional office, which disseminates the report back to wherever is supposed to take care of it.

RTN: What about the fact that--and let's use the blankets as an example of this...

(The telephone interrupts us. It is the blanket supplier. The discussion concerns 3,000 blanket with crooked Amtrak logos sent out a week ago.)

RTN: These were the 3,000 green ones--with the crooked logo?

Buyes: No, these were blue ones with a crooked logo. It's not really crooked, it's off center. You really have to look at it carefully to know it, but in the meantime, we do expect--we're paying good money, we like to have a good job.

RTN: I certainly appreciate your efforts on that because you and I have shaken that information out, but the car attendant out in the field doesn't know this. He does not know that there was a snafu. I'm hypothetically saying that when you get out on a train there's always some problem, and people come up with their own answers: 'Amtrak didn't do this,' or 'Amtrak doesn't care about that...'

Buyes: Basically we put together our organization to see that the train leaves with its total compliment--full par. Right now you've got a hundred operations from inside out--for our ex-On Board Service Directors who are now Station Managers. Each of them is responsible for one name train. One for the Empire Service, one for Metroliners, clockers, NATIONAL LIMITED, the BROADWAY and the ADIRONDACK. Now they make sure that everything that is required for their train's operation is there, without getting involved in operations per se. We know it's going to work; it's going to take a little training--a LOT of training in order to make it work. And this is currently being implemented.

RTN: So, the problems that happened last week won't happen this week?

Buyes: No, the problems that happened last week will be modified to a different problem maybe this week but hopefully not the same. We don't cover over problems--we're not that naive, but we will have everything controlled.

RTN: Are there Station Managers at Sunnyside Yard?

Buyes: Yes.

RTN: Well, then working closely with railroad personnel as they do, what if there is a difference of opinion? Whose opinion overrides, the railroad's or Amtrak's?

Buyes: Well, the opinion that comes from the passenger.

RTN: That's fine on paper, but does it really work that way?

Buyes: Yeah, it's working now. For instance, you asked about linen: we have a procedure in this organization: all linen will also be inventoried on a par basis, which procedure is implemented. Now there's a par to be made from a train. It cannot leave without the necessary complement--the par--and this is the responsibility of the yard crew.

RTN: Are the "On-Board Requirements" going to be the same all the time?

Buyes: Oh, it will vary. A par will probably be established in the following manner: I'll read you out of the procedure book. "When a par first is established, after 4 trips it is reviewed to see if it reflects actual needs. (b) A review of permanent par is done every 2 weeks to see if a chronic shortage exists..." Right there you have the procedure in a nutshell. It's simple, it's supposed to alleviate the problem we're talking about. Of course there'll be emergencies. You take an average train with average load, all of a sudden you have a group of 200 people boarding--what do you do then? O.K., for this situation we have a 24-hour and a 6-hour commissary information form. The book reads, "if the 24-hour commissary forecast shows larger than expected passenger load, 20% over normal or more, increase said par by across-the-board percentage to insure sufficient stock and inform commissary immediately of altered amounts." Where there are two diners assigned and one is shopped or blanked, add 50% to the existing diner's complement. Now 50% is not sufficient to cover all of it, but there's no way to fit 50% of the extra people...

RTN: You don't have that much storage space either.

Buyes: So that's the procedure going out to be implemented now.

RTN: The various problems in recent months...

Buyes: ...are met head-on and will be straightened out.

RTN: So the older procedures are academic now.

Buyes: They're not academic. We learned a lot from them. To proceed now, we have to combine old with new and come up with a better one.

RTN: Mr. Buyes, you've been here only 2½ months, and already have effected a number of changes. Before that you were regional vice president of A&A Services, a large food company specializing in "in-plant," airline feeding, restaurants, hotels. Some people are concerned that Amtrak will slowly but surely get into the idea of serving airline-type food in an airline-type way.

Buyes: No. No way you can serve a rail passenger, who likes to take his time in traveling, a hurried meal. Traveling on the train I consider to be the height of traveling experience. When you travel in an airplane you are rushing; when you're traveling in a train you are enjoying. That is why we want a much more elaborate menu. Is that showing a direction toward the airlines? On the contrary.

RTN: That's true, but you're faced with the snack bar coaches.

Buyes: That's for the short haul. For the 3-5 hour passenger you want to provide food but not impose upon him a full meal. The airlines give a meal not because they have to, but because they don't know how to keep him occupied. The price of that meal is automatically included in his ticket whether he eats it or not.

RTN: Something like ten dollars, isn't it?

Buyes: If the CAB can ever separate it, it will be quite a jolt. That's a major reason that PSA has been so effective in California--no meals, period. Therefore they eliminate a heavy overhead and can operate more effectively.

RTN: Do you have any control over the type of food service equipment that is placed on the train?

Buyes: We go to Marketing and Operations and explain to them our capability on each piece of equipment--on a 48-seat diner we can go up to 220 passengers on a long haul, and we say that X number of passengers are in the diner, X number in the lounge. We figure we can do 4 sittings safely. Start at 6:00 and end with a 10 o'clock diner. You serve 160 to 188 out of 220 passengers.

RTN: Have there been any plans to change the eating equipment on any trains?

Buyes: Yes, there are a number of new diner concepts we're looking at which are premature to discuss right now. The concepts are based on available cars and refurbishing of cars and putting our whole fleet under one line, so to speak. The interior at least should be the same so all crews in our system should be alike. As we modify cars we are looking for standardization of this nature.

RTN: What's the procedure on a train that has the diner or snack bar that's supposed to stay open until it gets to the terminal. What about this problem of attendants closing early? What is early?

Buyes: They're not supposed to close early--it's illegal. Now we are inventorying the train in the station instead of before it arrives. The yard crew meets it, and the facility will have to be open because everything will have to be in place for us to inventory it. We're making sure they're not closed. We really looked at it very, very hard in light of today's needs, today's trouble, today's speed... and with today's emotions.

RTN: The attendant gets paid for X minutes after arrival at the terminal to do this, right? But yet, we see them closing early. I just rode a conventional train from Washington to Baltimore, and we got half way to Baltimore from Wilmington and it was closed up tight. He was very nice about it and he served a beer--but he was closed.

Buyes: What they do is they start to inventory and will serve out of the inventory rather than off the shelf... they have to take an inventory... as we put the new procedure into effect that will be taken at the terminal.

RTN: When will this procedure be in effect?

Buyes: Two to three weeks at the most (from late November). This is all over the system, not just in the Northeast Corridor.

RTN: Can you do it in that short a period of time?

Buyes: The people are in place; all they have to do is change the mode of operation.

RTN: These are the Station Managers. Suppose I see so-and-so closing early--what do I do?

Buyes: Send me a note saying that you've seen it, and we will correct it. Tell me that you have seen it, and coming from a responsible person I will take it as such. Everyone breaks the law in some way or another. That's why we have some people who observe and some people who watch. When we file a report, it's not a tattle-tale, it's something we all need to keep a business going.

RTN: Suppose John Q. Passenger comes up to a snack bar attendant and ways he wants something to eat. The attendant says he's closed. What does the passenger do?

Buyes: Go to the Conductor.

RTN: He could actually force the attendant to open?

Buyes: As long as the train is in motion and the attendant is there and the food is there, sales should be made. Now, one reason we removed the On-Board Service Directors was that we knew the operations--we learned the operation on the train and we needed an organization on the ground. Those personnel who learned train operation can put their knowledge to better use on the ground so we can see all of our problems. That was one of the major criteria of the decision.

RTN: What was the original reason for the On-Board Service Directors?

Buyes: They were put on the train to learn how the operations went. And we hired those first who had a railroad background. Now, let's keep in mind that we are not discounting what the railroads did. We are not saying we know better; we are just trying to put today's methods into use with yesterday's equipment. For example, in this day and age you cannot keep on broiling steaks over actual charcoal in a small cabin on the train. There is no way we can put someone on a 4-day trip with Prestologs under his nose. We're looking at electrical equipment, things that will make the kitchen more bearable. Once they remove this big, ugly stove you gain more

space and the kitchen becomes larger.

RTN: Yes, but in the meantime, in the next 6 months, say, the employee is stuck with what they've now got?

Buyes: Well, we've added fans in the kitchens; we tried to make the pantries larger, the work area a little different. We did some on the cars we just refurbished.

RTN: What about those that weren't changed, like the old 1400-series Santa Fe diners of 1937 and 1942 vintage?

Buyes: They didn't need any improvements.

RTN: What about tipping?

Buyes: We pay our crews well enough that they shouldn't be tipped. Tipping should be only for over and above excellent service. They get a certain hourly wage with a 180-hour per month guarantee. Now this breaks down to 45 hours per week. A person travels from Chicago to L.A. and makes 2½ trips and has his guarantee. The only time you consider down time is the rest time. They work hard--basically from 5 in the morning to 10 at night. Also, the cook back in the kitchen isn't getting tips.

RTN: Amtrak will not establish any policy about tips, is that right?

Buyes: We couldn't. This is between the passenger and the attendant. Just like the Red Cap now doesn't charge to deliver baggage, the waiter doesn't charge to deliver food. If you want to tip in either case, you are free to do so. We tried, in isolated cases, to have a no-tipping policy, but it was unenforceable. And printing "No tipping" on menus? They just disappeared. So it's up to the passenger now.

Time ran out on us at this point. I thanked Mr. Buyes for the time he had taken with my questions.

It was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, so I took the Fridays-and-extra-days-only MAYFLOWER to Baltimore. Its run normally goes on to New York, but this day was scheduled all the way to Boston. GG-1 No. 909 was on the head end. Amtrak coach 5628 and PC coach 1571 were the first two cars, and both were closed off. The rest of the train was all Penn Central cars: #1524 (ex-21 roomette "Tyrone Inn"), 1583, 2914, 1597, 3237 (ex-N&W 10/6 "Hampton Sidney College", now a 72-seat snack bar coach; 1586, 1513, and 1591. Just one little snack bar for all those coaches, altho one of the lounge sections up front was converted to a snack facility.

After a number of interviews and visits at Amtrak so far, I was now off for a long weekend of train riding. It was up to Montreal, this time for Canadian capers.

EAST-WEST TRANSCONTINENTAL ROUTE PLANNED THRU DALLAS

An experimental Amtrak route thru Dallas, originating at Atlanta and terminating at Los Angeles, is being sponsored by major cities, was the statement made Jan. 22 by Burt C. Blanton, retired Dallas-based consultant to business and industry, and deputy member of the Dallas City-County Amtrak Committee.

"The project is feasible, has a great potential in relation to passenger traffic, and the entire route consists of good track and well ballasted roadbed," Blanton said.

"The service would operate out of Atlanta over rails of the Southern Railway thru Birmingham to Meridian; thence over Illinois Gulf Central rails thru Jackson, Vicksburg and Monroe to Shreveport; thence over Texas & Pacific rails thru Marshall, Longview and Dallas to Fort Worth; thence over Burlington Northern rails thru Wichita Falls to Amarillo; and thence over Santa Fe rails thru Clovis to Los Angeles. This route must include connecting service from Shreveport to New Orleans, Amarillo to Denver, and Barstow to San Francisco," Blanton said.

"Attention is directed to the fact that this proposed new rail route constitutes a recognized corridor of passenger traffic established decades ago. Consequently, the inauguration of this service by Amtrak will prove its broad acceptance and growing popularity. Yesteryear's connecting rail service over this specific route was not terminated because of diminishing patronage but was the result of deliberate planning by executives of some railroads which culminated in downgrading and destruction of the passenger train," Blanton said.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE NEW SECRETARY of Transportation, if Congress approves, will be Attorney William Coleman Jr. of Philadelphia. He will be the second black cabinet member in the nation's history. Coleman is 54 years old, and a former president of the NAACP legal defense and educational fund. He is a Republican, a graduate of Harvard Law School ..... THE BART ACCIDENT of Jan. 19, described last issue, was found to be the fault both of the maintenance truck driver, who was killed, and the train dispatcher, in an investigation just completed. The crash of a train at full speed into a maintenance truck occurred outside of operating hours..... THE BIG NEWS from Southern California is that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors by a 3-2 vote on Jan. 28 agreed to purchase 8 railroad cars to start up its own commuter service between San Diego and L.A. The 8 cars are from the little Oregon Pacific & Eastern Railway of Cottage Grove, Oregon (near Eugene). The cars are: ex-WP 882 "Silver Planet" dome sleeper observation from the CALIF. ZEPHYR; Milwaukee Road 172 & 173 lunch-lounges; and ex-IC coaches 2504, 2600, 2601, 2627 & 2632. They will be bought for a total of $198,000 and refurbished at a cost of $60,000-120,000 per car. Supervisor Baxter Ward, a strong advocate of realistic train service, was the deciding factor in the deal. He argued that the county couldn't lose, given the demand for cars around the country. The L.A. Times didn't like the idea, and editorialized (Jan. 31) that they had "put the caboose before the locomotive," since no contracts had been signed with Amtrak, the Rapid Transit District, or Santa Fe, and without knowing the precise schedule. The Bootstrap Railroad, as the operation is already nicknamed, is hoped to be running in 3 months, with Santa Fe providing the engines, and the RTD (of which Baxter Ward is a director) providing connecting buses..... AN ADDITIONAL EFFORT to enlarge rail service L.A.-San Diego is being made by the 3 counties, Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego. They are working out arrangements for a 403B Amtrak service in addition to the "Bootstrap Railroad." The second train will hopefully be running in the fall, on a schedule that leaves L.A. at 2pm and reaches San Diego at 4:35, then coming back at 6 with an 8:35pm arrival. Baxter Ward's train would be an early morning commute to L.A. with a 5:25pm departure south to San Diego..... THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC Railroad has been accused of misallocating over $3 million to its commuter line, causing it to look more unprofitable than it is, reports the S.F. Examiner (Feb. 2). The accusation is in a special report by the state auditor general to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which looked into SP's recent request for a 111% fare increase for its San Francisco-San Jose commute service. The report recommended that the Public Utilities Commission defer the increase pending further investigatiOn.....

* * *

THE UNITED STATES Railway Association, revamping bankrupt Northeast rail operations, has decided that 26% of the lines there should be either abandoned or subsidized..... HEAVY SIERRA SNOWS now have SP's rotary snow plows out working in the summit areas, where over 100 inches lay on the ground. The rotaries haven't been needed in 2 or 3 years. The non-stop storm which began about Jan. 31 was undoubtedly touched off by George Hyko's comment in our last issue about the drought..... AMTRAK'S FIRST NEW Turboliner from the latest shipment docked at New Jersey on Feb. 7 and began its trip to Chicago Feb. 10. Midwest expectations are that two of the 4 trains being delivered this year will go onto the Chicago-Detroit route, one onto Chicago-Carbondale and one added to the Chicago-St. Louis service to provide daily Turbo runs there..... A freight derailment on BN caused a detour of SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR No. 6 due in Chicago Feb. 9 and No. 5 that left there the 8th. The detour was on BN Chicago-Galesburg-West Quincy-St. Joseph MO-Pacific Junction (near Council Bluff) and added about 6 hours to the run..... WHILE MILD RAINS drip down here, Chicago shivers in below-zero weather. The consist of the BROADWAY LIMITED froze up in the yards Feb. 9 and the train was badly delayed in getting into Union Station for boarding..... COAST STARLIGHT, TRAIN 14, had a fire due to a bad stove in the diner (car 8037) on Feb. 5 and lunch counter car 8101 from a SAN JOAQUIN consist was substituted at Oakland..... AND PRESIDENT BIAGGINI'S Officers Special arrived back in Oakland at 5:15pm Feb. 5...

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY eastbound derailed at 3:55am on Jan. 31 soon after leaving the Huntington, WV station. All 8 cars left the tracks, and remained upright. There was only one reported possible injury among the 110 passengers. Cause of derailment was not determined..... SPEAKING OF SAFETY in transportation, the National Safety Council reported this month that an estimated 46,200 people were killed in the U.S. in auto crashes in 1974, a 17% decrease from 1973. About 10,000 lives were saved because of the reduced speed limit and reduced amount of driving. It was the worst year ever for airline safety around the world, and just one person died in an Amtrak wreck--the woman from the July 5 derailment of the SOUTHWEST LIMITED at Melvern, KS (who died later in a hospital after her condition was called satisfactory)..... THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL will lose its southbound connection with the COAST STARLIGHT for two months starting on Feb. 23, when Amtrak changes its Vancouver departure time to 7am (because the U.S. goes onto Daylight Time that morning, while Canada remains on Standard Time until April). It will reach Seattle at 12:30pm. Amtrak said Greyhound connections will be arranged, with Amtrak tickets honored. There is no change in the northbound schedule, except that it will reach Vancouver at 10pm Canada time instead of 11pm..... AMTRAK HAS AGAIN re-routed the FLORIDIAN on C&EI and L&N tracks, as it did for 8 weeks last year. Federal inspectors looked at Penn Central's tracks and ordered them repaired. The southbound train leaving Feb. 11 and the northbound one of Feb. 10 were the first to take the changed route..... A LANDMARK CASE for Amtrak was decided on Dec. 31 but did not get to the press until Feb. 11: the arbitration panel ruled that the ICG railroad must upgrade the entire 922-mile double-track route of the PANAMA LIMITED, Chicago-New Orleans, at an unspecified multi-million dollar cost. The track must be restored to the condition existing when Amtrak took over in 1971. The level of utility to which it must be restored is to be decided by the arbitration panel..... WASHINGTON STAR-NEWS reported Jan. 30 that Amtrak's board of directors on the 29th had voted to buy bi-level sleepers, 55 cars out of the total of 235 bi-level cars under consideration. The cars were described as budget type sleepers holding 52 passengers in 26 rooms, and with at least 4 public toilets, but no in-room toilets. An Amtrak spokesman said later that the board had actually voted to proceed with negotiations leading to their purchase, but had not yet awarded a contract, and could not announce the name of the builder. The toilet problem is that federal health requirements demand self-contained, chemical units. Amtrak finds it problemmatic to place them in each room because of the extra expense of the units, the odor, and the cost of the extra plumbing required. The full order for 235 bi-level cars, to be made public later, involves not only the budget sleepers, but also coaches, food service coaches, and diner-lounges with downstairs kitchen..... AMTRAK'S ANNUAL REPORT is now at the printer, and will be mailed shortly after this issue of RTN. For the first time, a copy of the report will be mailed to every Amtrak employee..... WHAT'S THE STATUS of upcoming new Amtrak routes? At the moment, the next one set to begin is Norfolk-Cincinnati on March 25. No definite startup dates have been announced for any others..... NEW CANADIAN NATIONAL President and Chief Executive Officer Robert A. Bandeen told a reporter early this month that the government should buy a new passenger car fleet for Canada, and that if it did, and CN's and CP's joint passenger train proposal is accepted, that "we promise to give them one of the best passenger services in the world." He was highly critical of the recent CTC report on Amtrak, and recommended breaking CN up into components similar to CP's Ships, Rail, Trucks, etc., to find which parts are "unhealthy"..... THE DOT ANNOUNCED this month that railroad travel in the nation was up in the 3rd quarter of 1974 compared to the same period of 1973. Railroad passenger totals increased from 62,590,000 to 66,280,000 while air passenger miles dropped from 50.06 billion to 48.29 billion, and auto vehicle miles dropped from 277 to 274 billion. Interstate water travel also increased, from 2,252,000 passengers to 2,285,000 passengers.....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Commuters using Penn Central Raidroad trains between Baltimore and Washington will face a 25 per cent fare boost..." --Washington Post, January 7
(Those old raiders are at it again.)

Express Ads

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COLOR SLIDES - Two new 25-slide sets feature Northwest steam power of the past decade (both logging and excursion) and passenger, mixed and freight operations of four Canadian railways: Quebec North Shore & Labrador, Cartier, Canada & Gulf Terminal and Greater Winnipeg Water District. Sets are $6 each postpaid. Or send 25¢ for a sample slide and list of all 19 sets available from Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, OR 97405.

TIMETABLES - Buying all public TTs. Amtrak and earlier. Send your list. Collections too. C. F. Loucks. 199 Wayland St., Hamden, CT 06518.

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PULLMAN FURNITURE - Have your own lower berth. We have 4 sets of lower berth seats and most of the hardware for them available in Mexicali. Recently removed from American-owned car. Price per set $100.00. Also have a couch from a roomette for $100.00. Four dining car chairs for $50.00. Roomette mirrors at $15.00 each. The latter material is available in Torrance, CA. For details on where to pick up this equipment, call (213) 378-1882 days or in evening from 8:00pm to 10:00pm (213) 375-9891.

1975 Chesapeake & Ohio Calendar - 12 Steam and Diesel photos of C&O operations adorn this new calendar. First year of issue; only $2.00 postpaid. C. J. Bocklage, Jr., 6816 Fait Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224.

STILL AVAILABLE - 30 page illustrated history/roster of C&O lightweight passenger car fleet including dispositions of cars to IC, B&O, D&RGW, SCL, AMTRAK, etc. Complete data on all cars bought for the Pere Marquettes, The Chessie, and C&O's regular trains. Diagrams included. Only $3.00 postpaid. R. E. Jackson, 3 Admiral Blvd., Dundalk, MD 21222.

PSGR. CAR SLIDES wanted by R.S. Brundage, 2440 E. 51 St, Apt C2, Tulsa OK 74105.

PHOTO BADGES 55¢, 2/$1. We'll turn your photo or your favorite rail photo into a handy 2½" round badge. Very attractive. A great way to meet new railfans on AMTRAK. Send any small photo with stamp to: Joe Schwieterman Box 13 Maria Stein OH 45860.

ALWAYS KEEPING A WATCHFUL EYE over Amtrak and the railroad scene, The Fast Mail is a newsletter you don't want to miss. Published monthly, the FM contains news, features, and items of interest that we promise you'll like, or your money back after your first issue. $3.75 a year (12 issues) to The Fast Mail, 10700 S. Seeley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643.

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS has been the driving force behind the rail renaissance in Michigan. Our results: THE BLUE WATER, THE EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS, and the MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE. We are presently involved in 4 ICC cases; we will do more, but we need support--YOUR support. Membership dues are $5 per year; with memberships expiring in December. Membership includes a subscription to the WOLVERINE MAINLINER, our monthly publication. MARP, Box 6901, Grosse Pte, MI 48236

TIMETABLE BARGAINS GALORE, GRAB BAGS, $13 worth of Public Timetables only $6.00, $30 worth only $12.00. Also have amazing clear plastic slip covers for public timetables only 8¢ each postpaid. Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Rd., Holland PA 18966.

PLAN YOUR FAMILY VACATION around the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TIMETABLE COLLECTORS Annual Convention in Philadelphia (the Bicentennial City) July 31, Aug 1, 2, 3 at the Penn Center Sheraton Hotel. 4 big days of buying, selling & trading railroadiana plus fan trips, a fabulous banquet featuring the renowned Bruce Heard, Chief of Amtrak Timetables, an auction and much more. Full particulars on the convention and membership from Bob Russell, 400 S. Chester Pike, Apt 6-B, Glenolden PA 19036 (215) 212-7251. Be there to believe it.

SNOW AND WINDS the first week in February caused many travelers' advisories to be posted in Idaho and Washington, but Amtrak service was affected only slightly. Many highways and schools in the Spokane area were closed, but EMPIRE BUILDER runs were only modestly behind schedule..... SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR eastbound runs were routed over SP's westbound trans-Sierra main line in late January. All traffic was removed from the eastbound line to allow for daylighting of Tunnel 19, near Auburn, California. The 65-year-old bore was dispatched to oblivion by 1300 pounds of high explosive, moulded into 300 separate charges for the Jan. 22 blast. The line was re-opened on Jan. 28..... THE CLEARANCE CARD, newsletter of the S.W. Railroad Historical Society, reports that there are four surplus Trans-Europe Express trains in Europe available at $400,000 each. They are said to be in good condition, being replaced by electric trains on the Holland-Switzerland run..... DALLAS TELEVISION CHANNEL 8 did a 6 o'clock news report on the INTER-AMERICAN on Jan. 31, emphasizing train problems due to worn-out equipment..... WHERE WAS PRESIDENT Biaggini of SP going? Last issue George Hyko reported his presence on the southbound STARLIGHT out of Oakland. The Clearance Card says he turned up in Texas the weekend starting Jan. 24, coming in via El Paso and San Antonio in a 3-car Director's Special, and last seen heading out on the Cotton Belt line, probably heading for East St. Louis..

THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL celebrates a kind of 25th anniversary this year, notes Amtrak in its Feb. 1 employee newsletter, since the Great Northern's INTERNATIONAL began running in 1950. The 155-mile route, aside from the L.A.-San Diego run, is Amtrak's shortest route west of the Mississippi..... ONE OF AMTRAK'S new Turboliners just sent over from France set a speed record on the Orleans-Vierson, France route in an Amtrak acceptance test, reaching a maximum speed of 132.6mph. Each of the 4 new trains will have a capacity of 308 passengers when outfitted with Amtrak seats... PORT HURON DEPOT in Michigan was demolished by Grand Trunk in late January with hardly a warning, much to the dismay of admirers of its Spanish Renaissance architecture, reports the Wolverine Mainliner.....